



Nourishing the fitrah of each unique child

Critical Incident Policy

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Critical Incident Policy

At Unique Academy, we strive to provide a safe and secure environment for all of our pupils to learn, develop, grow and for their *fitrah* to be nourished. Unfortunately, crises or tragedies can occur and can result in significant distress for all individuals involved as well as for the school as a whole.

A school can be affected in a number of ways, for instance, if a pupil or member of staff dies, the whole school may feel the loss; or, when pupils who have suffered shock or injury return to school, they may need to be treated with particular sensitivity. There are any number of possibilities requiring any number of responses and this policy outlines some of the procedures Unique Academy will take if such an incident presents itself.

Definition Of A Critical Incident

An incident becomes a critical incident when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school operating under normal conditions, and requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services, the trustees and/or Hounslow Local Authority and others.

Where there has been a death or serious injury arising through interpersonal violence, this will constitute a Critical Incident, regardless of the perceived capacity of the school to cope. The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on the school property, in the local community or out of the school area (eg a school trip).

What counts as a Critical Incident?

There are three levels of incident. These are:

Level 1 – Major incident involving a large number of children/adults e.g. bus/train crash, major violence.

Level 2 – Incident involving death or serious assault or other traumatic incident witnessed by children or staff.

Level 3 – Distress/trauma resulting from an incident such as the sudden death of a teacher or classmate through a road traffic accident for example, but not witnessed by the pupils.

Types of Emergency / Critical Incident

Pupils may be affected by crises that occur either in or out of school. Here are some examples:

In-school:

- the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness;
- a traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member;
- a deliberate act of violence, such as a knifing or the use of a firearm;
- a school fire or flood;
- allegations or actual incidents of abuse against pupils by staff and staff against pupils;
- an arson attack on the school;
- a bomb threat.

Out-of-school

- deaths or injuries on school journeys, trips or residential trips;
- tragedies involving children from many schools at public events such as football matches;
- civil disturbances;
- refugee children joining a school, uprooted from their countries and perhaps shocked by wars or atrocities;
- abductions / disappearances;
- Incidents involving the murder of school children that attract the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods;
- a civil disturbance or terrorism;
- a disaster in the community;
- a transport accident involving school members.

The emotional effects of disasters on children are not always immediately obvious to parents or school staff. Indeed, at times children find it difficult to confide their distress to adults as they know that it will upset them. In some children the distress can last for months, even years, and may additionally affect their academic attainment. Some young people may not feel comfortable enough or be able to share their feelings and thoughts in public or with staff either because they are unable to do so or because they fear their confidence may be abused. Similarly, because many adults are not able to talk about death, bereavement and tragedy, they may unwittingly stop children talking about similar emotional experiences.

At Unique Academy, we take all children's needs seriously, including emotional and psychological and are committed to ensuring all children receive the help they require to explore such matters as death and significant harm or injury in an environment of trust, care and safety. We also recognise the impact such incidents can have on the well-being of staff and parents/ carers and will do our utmost to support any recovery needed and to work with any agencies.

Preventive and Precautionary Measures

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.

At Unique Academy we expect that:

- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the school's fire and the evacuation procedures upon hearing the fire alarm;
- Staff will be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this policy);
- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that visitors cannot enter the school premises without wearing a visitor's badge;
- Staff organising school trips and visits follow the trip policy guidelines;
- Staff will sign in and out of the premises;
- Staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems;
- Staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work;
- Staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children or themselves before carrying out a curriculum or other activity.

Additionally, in the event of a critical incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip will be to:

- Save life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff
- Minimise loss and to return to normal working as quickly as possible

A list of useful contacts is given in Appendix 1 and will be published in the school office to improve the effectiveness of communication during an emergency. Staff will be informed as to the specific location of this.

Plan to minimise the impact of a crisis

At Unique Academy, we will follow any guidance given by the trustees, the Hounslow Local Authority as well as any advice given by the Emergency Services. We will do everything practically possible to reduce the health and safety risk to those in the school. We have provisions in place to aid us in preventing certain emergencies but in some cases, such as extreme weather, major power failure, or flooding, they cannot be avoided.

The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

- a) **Short term (Emergency) action (within 12 hours)**
- b) **Medium term action (24-72 hours)**
- c) **Longer term action (72 + hours)**

Short term (Emergency Actions)

The Headteacher or senior person present should follow the instructions below.

1. **Assess the situation and establish a basic overview of the incident.**
2. **Take immediate action to safeguard pupils, staff and visitors.**
3. **Attend to any casualties and administer first aid, if appropriate.**
4. **If appropriate, dial 999 for the emergency services and provide them with an overview of the situation. If in doubt, dial 999.** The emergency services notify each other of incidents but consider speaking directly to each organisation required. This will ensure that each service has the information they need to respond appropriately.
5. **Fetch any equipment that may prove useful (e.g. first aid kit, grab bag).**
6. **Log all communications and actions.**
7. **Notify school staff.**
8. **Assemble the School Emergency Management Team (SEMT) to assist with the response.**
9. **Refer to the list of emergency contact numbers for additional support if required.**
10. **Where possible, avoid closing the school and try to maintain normal routines.**
11. **Inform all parents/ carers that a significant accident has occurred and that their child may be upset.**
12. **A telephone call will be made to neighbouring schools to make them aware.**
13. **Pupils will be informed of what has happened in a factual but sensitive way so as to avoid any confusion.**

Medium Term Action

Careful and sensitive planning is required to ensure pupils, staff and the whole school community recover as quickly as possible and that stability is recreated.

At Unique Academy we will:

1. Make sensitive arrangements for the return to school which may include:
 - the possibility of part time or flexible attendance;
 - a catch up package is planned;
 - organising home visits by the class teacher to give a clear message of a support network at school;
 - set up support arrangements for any pupil who feels upset or overwhelmed by the recent events.
2. Arrange support for affected staff.
3. Advice will be sought from Health or Hounslow Local Authority personnel.
4. Liaise with parents which will include the sending of bulletins.
5. Decide about attendance at funerals.
6. A special assembly will be planned to allow the whole school community to acknowledge the events.
7. Ensure good communication between staff and parents/ carers on their progress in school.

Longer Term Action

At Unique Academy, we recognise that the effect of any crisis can last for many years. The following will be considered:

1. Introduce strategies to continue monitoring the most vulnerable pupils and staff.
2. All new members of staff will be informed of the events that took place and will have access to any monitoring notes made.
3. Consult and decide on whether and how to mark the anniversary of the event.
4. Plan how to deal with any legal processes, enquiries and even news stories that may bring back distressing memories and cause temporary upset within the school.

Bomb Threats

Actions to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat given via telephone:

1. Remain calm and talk to the caller
2. Note the caller's number if displayed on your phone
3. If you are able to, record the call
4. Write down the exact wording of the threat
5. Inform the Headteacher
6. Dial 999 and inform police

Action to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat sent via social media:

1. Do not reply to, forward or delete the message
2. If sent via email note the address
3. If sent via social media, what application has been used and what is the username/ID?
4. Dial 999 and follow police guidance
5. Preserve all web log files for the school and to help the police investigation (as a guide 7 days prior to the threat and 48 hours after).

Lockdown Procedure

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school. This procedure aims to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. The Lockdown procedure may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident/ civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school);
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils);
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc);
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school;
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog/animal roaming loose.

Unique Academy's lockdown plan is as follows:

Notification/Signals	
Full Lockdown	Staff will be notified that full lockdown procedures are to take place immediately on hearing the words "FULL LOCKDOWN" repeated 3 times.
Partial Lockdown	Staff will be notified that partial lockdown procedures are to take place immediately on hearing the words "PARTIAL LOCKDOWN" repeated 3 times.
All Clear	Staff will be notified that it is now all clear and safe by verbal confirmation in person or on the phone using the words "ALL CLEAR" .

'Stay Safe' principles (Run Hide Tell) give some simple actions to take in the event of a firearms and weapons attack.

Run

- Escape if you can.
- Consider the safest options.
- Is there a safe route? RUN if not HIDE.
- Can you get there without exposing yourself to greater danger?
- Insist others leave with you.
- Leave belongings behind.

Hide

- If you can't RUN, HIDE.
- Find cover from gunfire.
- If you can see the attacker, they may be able to see you.
- Cover from view does not mean you are safe, bullets go through glass, brick, wood and metal.
- Find cover from gunfire e.g. substantial brickwork / heavy reinforced walls.

- Be aware of your exits.
- Try not to get trapped.
- Be quiet, silence your phone.
- Lock / barricade yourself in.
- Move away from the door.

Tell

- Call 999 - What do the police need to know?
- Location - Where are the suspects?
- Direction - Where did you last see the suspects?
- Descriptions – Describe the attacker, numbers, features, clothing, weapons etc.
- Further information – Casualties, type of injury, building information, entrances, exits, hostages etc.
- Stop other people entering the building if it is safe to do so.

Lockdown Procedures

Lockdown	
Rooms most suitable for lockdown	All classes to remain in own classroom
Entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) should be secured	External main entrance door Fire doors Internal doors All windows
Communication arrangements	Classroom telephones Mobile phones (EYs)
Notes	If someone is taken hostage on the premises, the school should seek to evacuate the rest of the site

Full Lockdown Procedure

Steps	Initial response- Full Lockdown
1	Ensure all pupils are inside the school building. Alternatively, ask pupils to hide or disperse if this will improve their safety All adults are responsible for their own class.
2	All adults lock / secure entrance points (e.g. doors & windows) to prevent the intruder entering the building.
3	Dial 999. Dial once for each emergency service that you require. All staff who have access to a telephone to do so.
4	Ensure people take action to increase protection from attack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Block access points (e.g. move furniture to obstruct doorways) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sit on the floor, under tables or against a wall. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep out of sight. ● Draw curtains/blinds ● Turn off lights ● Stay away from windows and doors All adults are responsible for their own class.

5	Ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are aware of an alternative exit point in case the intruder does manage to gain access through the main entrance. All adults are aware of this.
6	If possible, all adults check for missing / injured pupils, staff and visitors.
7	Remain inside until an all-clear has been given, or unless told to evacuate by the emergency services.

- Staff will be alerted to the activation of the plan via the notification/signal of the verbal alarm.
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible, unless this endangers them or others. If children remain outside they will move to the nearest place of safety on or off site (at the Avenue Park).
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms.
- A head count or the register must be taken to account for all pupils.
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be blocked)
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via telephone (mobiles to be used if an internal line is not available) and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing if safe to do so.
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm.
- As appropriate, communication with the Emergency Services will be established and Hounslow County Council notified.
- Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via text message.
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown.
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded and everyone should leave the building via the nearest exit and assemble at the Avenue Park across the road.

Partial Lockdown Procedure

‘Partial lockdown’ is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

Steps	Partial Lockdown
1	All outside activity ceases immediately, children and staff return to the building.
2	All staff and pupils remain in the building and external doors and windows locked.
3	Movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances but this must be supervised by a member of staff.
4	All situations are different; once all staff and children are safely inside, SLT will conduct an on-going and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the appropriate body e.g., Emergency Services, Hounslow Local Authority. This can then be communicated to staff and children.

Lockdown Drills

Lock down practices will take place at least once a year to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do in such a situation. Monitoring of practices will take place and staff debriefed for positive reinforcement or to identify required improvements.

Emergency Communications

There are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that parents, staff, and pupils can be made aware of an emergency situation and remain informed. **Unique Academy** advises that in addition to the provision outlined below, parents and their children have their own individual arrangement planned for communicating in the case of an emergency. We ask that parents follow these emergency communication guidelines and do not call the school during a school emergency, but wait to be contacted, as it is important that school telephone lines are kept free for use by the school itself.

It is important that parents inform the school immediately of any changes in phone number or address as it is vital that these are accurate in the school records in case of an emergency.

How the school communicates with parents/families/carers during an emergency:

- **Unique Academy** will update the answer machine message regularly with information on the emergency which can inform and reassure parents/carers whilst reducing the burden on office staff. The school will consult the emergency services about what information can be provided to pupils and parents/carers.
- Specifically, designated phone lines for incoming and outgoing calls should be used to maintain communication with other organisations (e.g. the emergency services)
- Those who have been directly affected by the incident will be notified personally (either by a telephone conversation or face-to-face).

A log of communications will be maintained so as not to disturb people by contacting them more than once if it is not necessary.

Methods of informing parents/families/carers will also include:

- Email or text messages
- School Website
- Telephone
- Notices on the school gate
- Person at the entrance to the school to explain issues

Unique Academy will take proactive measures to prevent emergencies, and the school's health and safety provision outlined in this policy is designed with this in mind.

APPENDIX 1:

Responsibilities of the Recovery Management Team and Staff

In the event of a serious incident/emergency, the Recovery Team will be responsible for ensuring the following:

Responsibility	Contact	Position
Overall Coordination	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Evacuate the building	School Administrator	School Administration
Inform the Emergency Services	School Administrator	School Administration
Roll Call to confirm evacuation	All Teachers	Class Teachers
Security of building when evacuated	Mohammed Hamani	Site Manager
Immobilise Utilities	School Administrator	School Administration
Decide Next Steps e.g. close school/seal off area	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Statement for the Press	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Contact Social Services	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Inform children and staff	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Contact parents	School Administrator	School Administration
Contact Trustees	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher
Contact Public Liability Insurer	School Administrator	School Administration
Contact services and suppliers	School Administrator	School Administration
Contact local LA, HSE and/or DfE	Hawwa Mbombo	Headteacher

In the event of a disaster, only the Chair of Trustees will have the authority to make any public statements that represent the school.



APPENDIX 2:

Incident Management Action/Decision Log

Date	Time	Incident Type	Situation Update/Actions Taken